

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic West Overton Historic District

and or common West Overton Historic District

2. Location

street & number Frick Avenue

not for publication

city, town East Huntingdon Township ☒ vicinity of Scottdale

state Pennsylvania

code 42

county Westmoreland

code 129

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: stock farm

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple (see continuation sheet, attached)

street & number

city, town

vicinity of

state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Westmoreland County Courthouse

street & number N. Main Street

city, town

Greensburg

state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Western Pennsylvania Architectural Survey;
title Landmarks Planning, Inc. Survey Form has this property been determined eligible? ☒ yes ☐ no

date 1936; 1983

☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ localdepository for survey records Pennsylvania Room, Carnegie Library, Main Branch, Pittsburgh, PA;
Bureau of Historic Preservation, Harrisburg, PA

city, town

state

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☐ good
☒ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The West Overton Historic District is a collection of vernacular Greek Revival buildings dating from the early to mid 19th century that originally comprised the village of West Overton. The wedge-shaped area of approximately twelve acres flanking a small stream is located just northwest of Route 819 approximately 1-1/2 miles northeast of the town of Scottdale. The district's twenty major buildings sit at the head of and line Frick Avenue (originally called Overholt Street) which bisects the district from southwest to northeast. Settled by the Overholt family on the site of a log distillery in the early 19th century, West Overton grew to include by 1860 the family homestead, an expanded mill and distillery, several ancillary industries, houses for family members and tenements for laborers. A railroad traversed the site. While some buildings, such as the tenements, the malt house, and the cooper's shed are gone, the three major Overholt residences and the mill building remain, as well as a compact row of workers housing. The springhouse of the Overholt Homestead, which was the birthplace in 1849 of future coal and coke magnate Henry Clay Frick, is also intact. Route 819 has trespassed on the original district's eastern edge (it now separates some of the workers' houses from their original, but newly re-sided, out buildings) yet it has also discouraged further disruptions to district buildings. Intrusions are few.

Sited on a small hillside at the southern end of the district's single street is the Abraham Overholt Homestead (1838) and the Overholt Mill (1859), now the headquarters of the local historical society and a museum, respectively. North of these buildings, an operating stock farm utilizes two brick barns and two brick and frame outbuildings which probably date to the early 1870s; the adjacent farm house is aluminum sided but its stone foundation is visible. The hillside west of these buildings forms the western boundary of the district.

The stream which runs roughly east-west through the district separates the Overholt Homestead, the distillery and the stock farm from the rest of the buildings in the district. The railroad ran beside the stream, thereby reinforcing, in its day, some measure of separation between the Overholt Homestead and most of the other residences.

Eight buildings line Frick Avenue north of the stream. Six of these are in the western Pennsylvania vernacular Greek Revival style and are constructed of brick in Flemish and Common bonds, typical of mid-19th century brick houses in Westmoreland County. One frame building with six-over-six sash windows has been sided in asphalt shingles, although its stone foundation is visible; another building is modern, although it rests on a stone foundation where the malt house and cooper's shed, and later a tenement building associated with the distillery, stood originally. Remnants of the earlier industry are still in evidence in this spot; a small, one-story, square stone building sits beside the modern house and a long, low shed-like structure of various materials is situated to the south. The original location and exact dates of construction of these subsidiary buildings are

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

West Overton
Continuation sheet Historic District

Item number 7

Page 2

unknown. With the exception of the single modern house, all houses along Frick Avenue appear to have been built circa 1850. They are pictured on a 1857 atlas as the property of "A. & H. Overholt." It is possible that the houses predate the present mill and were built when an earlier mill was on the site, but the earliest documented date available at this writing is 1857, and the buildings may very well have been built when the new, larger mill was under construction.

The district's western boundary was drawn to include all relevant buildings but exclude a trailer park to the west. While many of the buildings of the district are not in good condition (the restored Overholt Homestead and the mill are notable exceptions), the overall architectural integrity is excellent. Slate roofing, banding below the eaves of brick laid in a sawtooth pattern, six-over-six sash windows and transomed doorways remain intact on six of the ten residential buildings. Bridged chimneys, dressed stone, and six-over-nine sash windows appear on three residential buildings. All buildings have a foundation primarily of coursed fieldstone of a uniform golden color. Of the twenty buildings in the district, nineteen are significant or contributing. (Included in the total number of buildings are six outbuildings for the Overholt Homestead and four farm buildings.) Five of these buildings were built in the latter part of the 19th century and are compatible in size, scale, siting and function with the other buildings and the site as a whole. They also share the same type of foundation as the other buildings. Classified as an intrusion is the aforementioned modern house (the only 20th century building in the district) built on the site of earlier distillery buildings and sited just east of the mill/museum buildings.

BUILDING INVENTORY:

1. Tax #47-13-130

Overholt Homestead: A two story, red-brick, five-by-two-bay center hall house with gable roof and bridged chimneys at each end. Beneath the roofline on the front elevation the brick is laid in a decorative sawtooth pattern seen in the other houses in the district.

Built in 1838 by Abraham Overholt, this is the oldest building in the district and the homestead of West Overton's founders. It is currently the district's showpiece and provides the architectural context for the district's other buildings. With a five-bay configuration, two rooms deep with center hall, the house is banked into a hillside with a fully exposed stone basement on its front elevation, sheltered by a full facade porch. A central stone stair with an ornamental iron bannister descends from a first story porch, adding an extraordinary touch to the facade, and a bull-eye motif in the moldings enlivens the door surrounds. A datestone in the gable end, beneath one of the house's two bridged chimneys, reads 1837. The

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet West Overton
Historic District

Item number 7

Page 3

building's materials--deep red brick, laid in Flemish and Common bond, and golden fieldstone foundation with neatly dressed corners--appear in nearly all the other buildings in the district, as do many of its stylistic details. Windows are six-over-six sash on the second story, nine-over-six sash on the first story, and six-over-nine sash at basement level. Lintels and sills are painted stone. All windows have wooden shutters. The central, eight-panelled single door on the front elevation is transomed and recessed in a panelled surround. Porch columns are round and slightly tapered at each end.

CLASSIFICATION: SIGNIFICANT

2. Tax #47-13-130

Overholt springhouse, sited north of the main house (above). A one-story, two-by-two bay stone building with a shingled gable roof and single end chimney, and six-over-six sash windows. A central panelled doorway is recessed in a coffered surround. The springhouse was the birthplace of Henry Clay Frick in 1849, and its doorway is pictured in The Early Architecture of Western Pennsylvania by Charles Stotz (1936).

CLASSIFICATION: CONTRIBUTING

3. Tax #47-13-130

Outbuilding, Overholt Homestead. Sited east of the main house, this is a one-story brick building with central chimney, gable roof, a three-by-two bay system, and six-over-six sash windows with wooden lintels and sills. There are two single doors. This building may have served as a kitchen for the main house.

CLASSIFICATION: CONTRIBUTING.

4. Tax #47-13-130

Outbuilding, Overholt Homestead. Nearly abutting building #3 is this one-story, gable-roofed brick building with doors on each gable end and six-over-six sash windows. This was probably a carriage house for the Overholts.

CLASSIFICATION: CONTRIBUTING

5. Tax #47-13-130

Outbuilding, Overholt Homestead. A small stone building sited just southwest of the main house with a gable roof and a door at one end. This may have been a smokehouse for the main house.

CLASSIFICATION: CONTRIBUTING

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet West Overton
Historic District

Item number 7

Page 4

6. Tax #47-13-130
Outbuilding, Overholt Homestead. A three-story, wide gable-roofed brick building, its walls pierced throughout with ventilation openings in an hourglass pattern and doors on three sides. Brick arches shelter inner doors on one of these elevations. Probably a storage building. A much smaller version of this building sits nearby.
CLASSIFICATION: CONTRIBUTING
7. Tax #47-13-105
Farmhouse. A two-story, three-by-one bay house with a two-bay rear extension and another addition partially filling in the house's ell. It is aluminum sided but has a visible stone foundation. Probably dates to circa 1880.
CLASSIFICATION: CONTRIBUTING
8. Tax #47-13-105
Overton Stock Farm Barn. A brick, three-story, three-by-five bay barn with gable roof and louvered windows with wooden lintels and sills. Openings have been altered in several places to accommodate current use. Fieldstone foundation. The building appears on an 1876 atlas as a "stable" and certainly was important to the functioning of the community.
CLASSIFICATION: CONTRIBUTING
9. Tax #47-13-105
Overton Stock Farm Barn. A brick, four-story, five-by-nine bay building with gable roof and louvered windows, some altered. A tile silo has been added. Foundation is of dressed stone. The building appears on an 1876 atlas as a "stable".
CLASSIFICATION: CONTRIBUTING
10. Tax #47-13-105
Overton Stock Farm. Farm Building. A one-story, two-by-one bay brick building with gable roof and eave returns, and door and window openings with stone lintels and sills. This building appears on an 1876 atlas along with the Overholt Homestead.
CLASSIFICATION: CONTRIBUTING
11. Tax #47-13-105
Overton Stock Farm. Farm Building. A one-and-a-half story frame building with gable roof sheathed in wooden cove lap siding. Two-over-two sash attic windows may be original; the eave returns are obscured and a metal shed is attached to the building's east side. This building appears on an 1876 atlas along with the Overholt Homestead.
CLASSIFICATION: CONTRIBUTING

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

West Overton

Continuation sheet Historic District

Item number 7

Page 5

12. Tax #47-14-5-2

1526 Frick Avenue. House. A two-and-a-half story, three-by-seven bay brick house with hip roof pierced by three chimneys and Greek Revival dormers on side elevations. Beneath the roofline is decorative brick banding in a sawtooth pattern. The street elevation features full-height, six-over-nine sash windows on the second story; other fenestration is six-over-six sash. All have stone lintels and sills. House is banked into the hillside so that its stone basement is visible on the lower side; there is a recessed, two-story porch on the upper side. The original wide doorway has been partially enclosed. This was the house of B.F. Overholt in 1876. It appears on an 1857 atlas.

CLASSIFICATION: CONTRIBUTING

13. Tax #47-14-5-2

Frick Avenue. House and Store. A two-story, ell-shaped brick house with bridged chimney at one end of the ridgepole and a hipped roof at the other. There is a dentilled brick "cornice," six-over-six sash windows with stone lintels and sills, and a wide off-center doorway with transom and sidelights, as well as a smaller adjacent door. The house's brick is laid in Flemish bond on one half, Common on the other. Also, the foundation is of dressed stone on the exposed basement of one half of the house; it is fieldstone on the rest of the house, beneath a dressed stone watertable. This was the house of Christian Overholt as well as the community store in 1876. The dual use may explain the building's somewhat unusual roofline, its two entries and its detailings. It appears on an 1857 atlas.

CLASSIFICATION: CONTRIBUTING

14. Tax #47-15-5-1

1045 Frick Avenue. House. A two-story, four-by-one bay brick house with a four-bay rear ell, shingled gable roof and interior end chimneys, attic windows, and sawtooth-patterned brick motif beneath the roofline. Windows are one-over-one sash with wooden lintels and sills; there is a single transomed door on the street elevation. This house appears on an 1857 atlas.

CLASSIFICATION: CONTRIBUTING

15. Tax #47-14-5-1

Frick Avenue. House. A two-story, four-by-one bay brick house with a one-story rear addition. Main roof, slate-shingled, is pierced by interior end chimneys. There is a sawtooth-patterned brick motif beneath the roofline. Windows are six-over-six sash with wooden lintels and brick sills. Paired doors in the center two bays of the street elevation have multi-paned transoms; the flanking windows have been obscured. Foundation is coursed fieldstone. This house appears on an 1857 atlas.

CLASSIFICATION: CONTRIBUTING

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

West Overton

Continuation sheet Historic District

Item number 7

Page 6

16. Tax #47-14-5-3

Frick Avenue. House. A one-and-one-half-story, three-by-one bay house with gable roof and exterior end brick chimney. Beneath asphalt shingles, wooden covelap siding is visible in several places. Windows are six-over-six sash and appear to be original despite extensive alterations to the rest of the house. There is a modern, one story addition on one end of the house. An 1857 atlas and 1876 atlas indicate a house on this site. The present building is not unlike the other small residences in size and scale, although it does appear to be frame underneath its siding. Its placement on the street reinforces the axial lay-out of the community.

CLASSIFICATION: CONTRIBUTING

17. Tax #47-14-5-4

Frick Avenue. House. A two story, three-by-one bay brick house with shingled gable roof and interior end chimneys and sawtooth-patterned brickwork beneath the roofline. Windows have wooden lintels and sills but the sash is no longer intact. A central single door has a multipaned transom. This house appears on an 1857 atlas.

CLASSIFICATION: CONTRIBUTING

18. Tax #47-14-5-5

Frick Avenue. House. Nearly identical to #17, this house differs significantly only in that its windows remain intact. It, too, appears on the 1857 atlas.

CLASSIFICATION: CONTRIBUTING

19. Tax #47-14-5-6

451 Frick Avenue. House. A modern two-story, irregularly-bayed house with peaked roof and sheathed in asphalt siding. Its foundation appears to predate it.

CLASSIFICATION: INTRUSION

20. Tax #47-13-130

Overholt Mill/Museum Building. A five-and-a-half-story, multi-bayed brick industrial building with gable roof. Windows are predominately six-over-six sash and have stone lintels and sills. Single doors are located on front and rear. There is evidence of some window alteration. Constructed in 1859, this was the mill for the successful Overholt distilling operation; it now houses a regional museum.

CLASSIFICATION: SIGNIFICANT

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration-settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1838; 1859

Builder/Architect Abraham Overholt

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The West Overton Historic District is an exceptional example of mid-19th century western Pennsylvania vernacular architecture, including along its single street the homestead of the village's founding family, the Mennonite Overholts; the mill building for the profitable family distilling industry; the village store; and houses for members of the Overholt family and laborers. This small district preserves not only the vernacular Greek Revival architectural style endemic of western Pennsylvania, but also, to a remarkable degree, the overall physical appearance of a mid-19th century rural industrial community. The district is further significant as the site of the township's oldest known distillery, and as the home of the regionally-influential Overholt family and the birth place, in 1849, of nationally-known coal and coke magnate, Henry Clay Frick.

The intact architecture of West Overton reflects the growth and development of its region. The vernacular Greek Revival style--crisp and orderly--was synonymous with the taming of the land in western Pennsylvania, and represented a major step architecturally and technologically beyond the log houses of the earliest settlers in the area. As an intact collection of this building style, West Overton dramatically illustrates the progress of western Pennsylvania settlement by the mid-19th century.

Implicit in the architecture of the buildings is the economic and social structure of West Overton, loose as that may have been in this small community at mid-century. Members of the Overholt family occupied the largest, most architecturally detailed houses while workers lived in simpler brick cottages. No bridged chimneys, wide porches, or full-height windows on these small houses; just three and four bay boxes with plain end chimneys. Nevertheless, the materials and stylistic influences common to the majority of buildings give the village an overall architectural unity startling in its evocation of an earlier era.

A 1876 bird's-eye view of the district demonstrates the high degree of architectural integrity the district retains. The site is relatively unchanged since that era, consisting of a small stream valley crossed by a single main street. Of the nineteen major buildings pictured on the property of "A.S.R. Overholt & Company" (Reading Publishing House, Reading, PA, 1876), sixteen remain. Dominating the site at the south end is the mill building (1859) across from the restored Overholt Homestead and its five outbuildings; running like a spine from a head is the single street lined with houses. The railroad, which once paralleled the stream beside the distillery, is gone, as are two large tenements. (The sites of one of the tenements and of the coke ovens are outside the present district boundaries.) Nevertheless, the intrusions are few and, because they are not incompatible in size or scale with the original buildings, they detract only minimally from the architectural harmony of the district.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet West Overton
Historic District

Item number 8

Page 2

The Overholt Distillery mill building (1859) is the oldest surviving such structure in a County in which the distilling industry flourished. Even so, it is the third building on its site. In 1810, Abraham Overholt and his brother, Christian, purchased 1,500 acres and a log distillery along Felgar's Run and named it West Overton. The log distillery had a capacity of three to four bushels per day. A stone distillery with a forty-to-fifty bushel daily capacity was constructed in 1814. The necessary grain for those distilleries was ground near Scottdale and hauled to the mill by oxen. In 1834, a brick flouring mill was added, and in 1859, the present 5-1/2 story brick mill building was constructed. Datestones on this building read "A. & H. S. Overholt/Overholt Mill's Built 1859" and "D. P. Patterson, Mill-Wright; M. Miller, Sr. Carpenter; Dillon & Gilbert, Bricklayers." The Overholt company saw continued success distilling rye whiskey into the twentieth century at West Overton.

Pennsylvania Census Records of Manufacturing are instructive concerning the Overholt business at mid-century. Of the twenty manufacturers listed in East Huntington Township in 1850, nearly a third were enterprises of the Overholts at West Overton. Abraham Overholt produced flour, whiskey, and barrels, and operated a Malt House and coal bank, while Henry Overholt ran a weaving operation. Among these, the steam-powered flour mill was the most economically significant, producing 10,800 barrels of flour a year valued at \$32,600, with a capital investment of \$3,000. The majority of capital (\$13,000.00), however, was invested in the distillery, which produced 2,750 barrels of whiskey valued at \$17,990 and employed three men. Twelve thousand casks were produced from the coopering operation, 7,000 bushels of malt from the Malt House, and 1,000 coverlets from the weaving operation. Each of those operations employed four men. Small by today's standards, the Overholt enterprises were, nonetheless, the largest collectively in the Township in their day. (For comparison, the next largest enterprise in 1850 in East Huntington Township was a flour mill operated by James Wade which produced 6,000 bushels annually and had a \$5,800 capital investment.)

By 1870 the Overholt business was listed in the manufacturing records as "the firm of A. and H. Overholt," and its output had increased, not surprising since a new, larger mill had been built in 1859. The flour mill earned \$25,000 annually; the distillery, \$40,512; and the cooper shop, \$2,247. The mill was in operation twelve months of the year, and the distillery, eleven. A total of fourteen men were employed, approximately the same number as in 1850.

By the 20th century, the Overholt distillery had acquired enough longevity to be known as the "Old Farm Distillery" (see Sanborn's Surveys of the Whiskey Warehouses of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, and New York). Though its production schedule had decreased to eight months of the year in 1912, it maintained an impressive 500 bushel per day mash

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

West Overton

Continuation sheet Historic District

Item number 8

Page 3

capacity (other distilleries in the region had capacities of less than 100 bushels per day and operated only two to four months of the year). The fact that the Overholt mill building remains reasonably intact, architecturally, today is important therefore, not only for the architectural completeness of the district, but as a record of one of the most significant industries in the region in the 19th century.

Put in a larger context, the Overholt distillery was a significant representative of an industry common if not ubiquitous in early western Pennsylvania and deeply related to the area's history. Distilling whiskey was an eminently convenient way of utilizing surplus grain and transporting it, in casks, to markets. Whiskey casks were frequent cargo on early riverboats. According to one source, rye whiskey distilled in the western counties achieved something of a national reputation for its flavor, and when sent west, commanded a premium price. The Whiskey Rebellion in the late 18th century, in which western Pennsylvania responded to a tax levied on whiskey by Congress in 1791, suggests the importance of the industry to the region at that early date, as well as recalling the feisty independence of the settlers.

Abraham Overholt erected another distillery south of West Overton at Broad Ford, Fayette County in 1853 that distilled 100 bushels per day. The celebrated rye whiskey, Old Overholt, was distilled and bottled there. Expanded in 1867, its capacity was eventually increased to 400 bushels per twelve hours. Abraham took on sons Henry and Jacob as partners and then son-in-law A. O. Tintzman. Around 1880, the firm was sold to H. C. Frick. A new larger plant was completed at the site in 1905 and, except for a hiatus during Prohibition, production continued in the twentieth century. In 1948, the Overholt Company became a "unit" of National Distillers; Old Overholt itself is still in production. No original buildings remain at the Broad Ford site.

Set in the midst of coal territory, West Overton was blessed with a ready supply of fuel for its mill, as well as for the region's subsequent major industry, coke production. Steam was essential for distilling, and coal-fueled steam power was used to grind flour, distill, and heat by the 1820s. By the 1840s, beehive ovens were producing good quality coke, and by 1900, 30,000 coke ovens burned in the area surrounding Scottdale. Coke itself had become the region's industry. The importance of coal and coke to the region is celebrated today at the annual Scottdale Coal and Coke Festival.

The success of West Overton as an early American industrial community owed much to the fortuitous location of resources, yet the exploitation of those resources was engineered by the industrious Overholts themselves and the family with which they became entwined, the Fricks. Both families were

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

West Overton
Continuation sheet Historic District

Item number 8

Page 4

Mennonites from Rotterdam who came to America in the early 18th century and settled in the Germantown section of Philadelphia.

Henry Overholt (1739-1813) and his son Abraham (1784-1870) led several other families to Westmoreland County in 1800. Abraham and his brother, Christian, purchased West Overton in 1810 and Abraham became sole owner in 1812. With his wife Marie Stauffer--whose family had been distillers since the early 18th century--Abraham had eight children. He gave a half interest in the farm, mill, and distillery to his eldest son, Henry, in 1850 (which explains the "A. & H. S. Overholt" inscription on the present mill building). In 1859, Abraham bought a half interest in a distillery at Broad Ford from son Jacob and assumed full ownership there five years later. That distillery became known as A. Overholt & Company, Inc. Abraham and Marie's children all remained in the West Overton area, if not in the village itself. Henry, Christian, and Anna and her husband continued to live at West Overton, as indicated by the atlas of 1876. Daughter Elizabeth and husband John Frick also lived there for several years.

The Frick family reached Westmoreland County in the late 18th century, establishing settlements at Port Royal, Adamsburg, and Irwin. John Frick (1822-1888) came to West Overton from the Port Royal area to work as a miller. Two years later he married his employer's daughter, Elizabeth Overholt, and the two families joined. In their home--the modest springhouse of the Overholt Homestead--Henry Clay Frick was born in 1849. The Fricks lived at West Overton until 1851, and then moved about, returning in 1860-62 when they occupied the house opposite Christian Overholt's house and store (probably one of the smaller brick cottages on the southeast side of Frick Avenue). In 1880, they moved to Wooster, Ohio.

The infant representative of the auspicious union of Overholts and Fricks was named for the great statesman of the day, Henry Clay. H.C. Frick (1849-1919) was raised literally in the shadow of the bustling Overholt distillery and grew up steeped in business. The young Frick attended school at West Overton (a schoolhouse was constructed in 1857 out of leftover bricks from earlier construction) and at age 14, worked in the store run by his great-uncle, Christian Overholt. For a time, Frick attended a Mennonite school in nearby Alverton. In 1868, at age 19, he was apprenticed to his grandfather, Abraham, as bookkeeper of the Overholt distillery at Broad Ford. Undoubtedly this upbringing contributed to the success of the future capitalist of reknown.

Indeed, Frick's entrepreneurial talents blossomed under his grandfather's tutelage. Soon Frick purchased a considerable block of stock in the Mt. Pleasant and Broad Ford Railway Company, which began in 1861 to develop the coal resources of West Overton and the surrounding areas. (Its tracks ran through West Overton.) Through negotiations with the Pennsylvania

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet West Overton
Historic District

Item number 8

Page 5

and Baltimore and Ohio Railroads, both of which were anxious to have greater access to the coal-rich Connellsville region at which Broad Ford was the center, Frick received enough capital to purchase 300 acres of coal land near the Overholt distillery and start up fifty coke ovens. Calling his first business "Overholt, Frick, & Co.," Frick entered into a partnership with his brother-in-law, A.O. Tinstman; his cousin, J.S.R. Overholt; and Joseph Rist. Almost immediately, Overholt sold out to Frick, and the name was changed to "Frick & Co.," and later "H.C. Frick Coke Co."

Frick's involvement with A. Overholt & Company, however, continued as he inherited a controlling interest in the company. Upon his death in 1919, that interest was acquired by Andrew Mellon, who had had an interest in the company previously and whose family had served as bankers for the Frick Company.

The Overholts had a philanthropic as well as an entrepreneurial bent which was passed on by H.C. Frick. The Overholts were instrumental in establishing the Western Pennsylvania Classical and Scientific Institute in nearby Mt. Pleasant in 1871. Christian Overholt (1824-1911) largely bankrolled the endeavor. The aims of the school were dual: to prepare young men and women for admission to the nation's best universities, and to provide scientific courses "for those that wish to prepare for teaching or active business life" (New Illustrated Atlas, p.23). C.S. Overholt served as president of the Institute's Board of Trustees from 1871-1907. Both B.F. Overholt and H.C. Frick served as trustees of the Institute, and Frick was an alumnus, as well. In 1936, the Institute merged with Bucknell University.

The legacy of educational philanthropy remains in the form of the H.C. Frick Educational Commission in Pittsburgh, created in 1909. The Commission funds projects for improvement in the quality of public, elementary, and secondary education in the City of Pittsburgh and counties of Allegheny, Fayette, Green, Washington and Westmoreland.

In the 1920s, Mrs. Helen Clay Frick donated the Overholt Homestead in West Overton to the Westmoreland-Fayette branch of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, which maintains it today. The former mill serves as a museum and library. In 1928, the homestead and farm building were "restored...much to their original appearance." Work on the main house consisted of repairs to the exterior and some renovations to the interior allowing for museum space on the second floor above living space on the first. (WPHS Magazine, vol. II, no. 1, p.1). The house was repointed in the early 1980s, and maintenance continues with the replacement of the slate roof in 1984.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Approximately 12

Quadrangle name Connellsville

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

(See Continuation Sheet)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christina Schmidlapp

organization U.S. City Corporation
400 The Landmarks Building

date 1/85

street & number One Station Square

telephone 412/391-7640

city or town Pittsburgh

state Pennsylvania 15219

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title _____ date _____

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date _____

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date _____

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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date entered

Continuation sheet West Overton
Historic District

Item number 9

Page 2

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Continuation sheet West Overton
 Historic District

Item number 9

Page 3

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Microfilm

Pennsylvania Census Records, Manufacturing, 1850 (p.555) 1870 (1860 unavailable).

Interviews

Mary Barkley, caretaker, Overholt Homestead, September, 1983, January, 1985.

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West Overton

Continuation sheet Historic District

Item number 10

Page 2

Beginning at the southernmost point, the district boundaries are as follows:

Proceed northeast along the west side of Route 819 to Frick Avenue, then northwest in a straight line across Frick Avenue to the northwest lot line of lot #47-14-5-1, continuing northwest and then southwest along said lot line in a straight line across the 15' alley to the lot line of lot #47-14-5-2, then northwest and then southwest along said lot line, continuing in a straight line across lot #47-13-105 (allowing for the inclusion of only those buildings listed on the building inventory on this lot) to the 1120' contour line, then southwest along this contour line across LR. 64224 to the west lot line of lot #47-13-130, continuing south and then east along said lot line to the point of origin.

